



Town of Hinesburg

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Town Meeting Minutes - February 29, 2016

- Draft -

The legal voters of the Town of Hinesburg, Vermont are hereby warned and notified to meet at the Champlain Valley Union High School auditorium, in said Town of Hinesburg, Monday, February 29, 2016 at 7:00PM to transact business on all articles except Article 1, which will be voted upon by Australian Ballot on Tuesday, March 1, 2016. Australian Ballot voting will occur at the Town Hall at 10632 Vermont Route 116 in Hinesburg, with the polls to open on March 1st at 7:00AM and close at 7:00PM. If necessary, the February 29th meeting may be adjourned to the Hinesburg Town Hall at 9:00 AM on March 1st to conduct any business left unfinished on February 29th.

The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m. Moderator Frank Twarog reviewed some Robert's Rules of Order as well as some of the things he had learned at a workshop for new moderators. He said that each person would only be allowed to comment on each item twice; once and then a second time after others had had their turns.

ARTICLE 1: To elect the necessary town and school district officers by Australian ballot Tuesday, March 1, 2016 (see "Officers for Election" list in the Annual Report).

Moderator Twarog stated that Article 1 would be convened at the town hall polling place on Tuesday, March 1 with the polls open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. for the election of officers.

ARTICLE 2: To hear the reports of the officers of the Town of Hinesburg and take action thereon.

The moderator then opened the floor to the Selectboard to present their reports on the Town. Selectboard Chair Michael Bissonette opened the reports by thanking volunteers from the community who were in the audience and asking them to stand. He thanked everyone, and especially those members of the fire and rescue department who had served for over 25 or 30 years. They were applauded by the audience. Tom Ayer reported on the facilities budget which included the recreation department. Member Andrea Morgante reviewed the highway department and mentioned that a new highway garage was in the planning stages and was sorely needed. A bond vote will be forthcoming sometime in the future. Phil Pouech did a quick overview of the police department and said they were looking into how to reduce the utility costs of the new building, as well as the dispatch costs. Jon Trefry then reviewed the fire department and mentioned that the bulk of the budget increase in the municipal budget was

due to a new fire truck that the department had purchased. The first payment for the truck is \$98,000. The new truck replaces 2 aging vehicles and will be more efficient and needs less manpower to operate. The two older vehicles will be sold and the revenue used to purchase equipment to outfit the new truck. They have also completed Phase 1 of the heating system upgrade and established automatic mutual aid with neighboring towns. Andrea Morgante asked Jon Trefry who is retiring from the Board to stay at the podium. She then joined him there to say some words of thanks and praise for his service to the Town and presented him with a plaque and gift certificate. Trefry said that he had greatly enjoyed his tenure on the Board and that it had been a privilege to serve.

The Moderator then opened the floor to Bill Lippert, Hinesburg's representative to the Vermont House. Lippert briefly reviewed some pending legislation of interest and reported that only 3 percent of Vermonters are now uninsured. He mentioned that the annual Doyle poll was available in the lobby and would also be at the polling place on the following day.

Norm Smith asked a question about whether the number of police officers was based on population. Twarog asked that he hold his question until the police budget was being discussed. Article 2 was moved and seconded and passed on a voice vote.

ARTICLE 3: Shall the Town approve a General Government budget of \$1,444,629 with the estimated sum of \$1,107,329 appropriated from property taxes to defray the general government expenses of the Town? *Moved and seconded. Ken Brown made a motion to amend the budget by increasing Selectboard Pay by \$2650 to restore it to the amount it was before they had cut their pay last year. The Selectboard stated that they are not allowed to increase their pay and that it can only be done by the voters at town meeting. After some discussion, the amendment was approved on a voice vote. Moderator Twarog then read the amended Article 3 which added said amount for a total of \$1,109,979 to be appropriated for the general government expenses of the Town. The amended article was moved and seconded and passed on a voice vote with one person voting no.*

ARTICLE 4: Shall the Town approve a Highway Department budget of \$853,149 with the estimated sum of \$715,149 appropriated from property taxes to defray the highway expenditures of the Town? *Moved and seconded. Kristin Miskavage asked if there was any consideration being given to timing the roadside mowing in such a way as to control the spread of poison parsnip. Barbara Forauer asked about dust control costs vs. paving as she noted that the blacktop line in the budget was lower than the dust control. She was informed that the reason for this is that paving is in the capital budget rather than the regular budget. The question was called by the moderator as there was no more discussion and it was passed unanimously on a voice vote.*

ARTICLE 5: Shall the Town approve the Hinesburg Community Police Department budget of \$517,438 with the estimated sum of \$493,438 appropriated from property taxes to defray the police expenditures of the Town? *Moved and seconded. Norm Smith then asked*

his prior question about whether or not we will be needing a new officer anytime soon? Chief Koss said he doesn't anticipate that happening in the near future. Sharon Lee Trefry asked why the CUSI budget had decreased and Koss answered that the calculations had changed and our contribution had decreased. Miriam Granat asked about the cost of people like kids dialing 911 and felt we should educate people about how much it costs the town every time someone dials 911. Bob Thiefels wanted to know who approves all of the various grants that the Town receives and if people know how much it might cost to maintain and replace the equipment that we purchase with grant funding. The Selectboard approves most grants before they are signed. An audience member wanted to know if the officers carried tasers and if there was a written policy regarding their use. The answer was yes to both questions. The Article was moved and passed on a voice vote.

ARTICLE 6: Shall the Town approve the Hinesburg Fire Department budget of \$314,623, with the estimated sum of \$286,623 appropriated from property taxes to defray the fire expenditures of the Town? *Moved and seconded.* Ruth Ayer wondered how it was that we had purchased a new fire truck for almost \$500,000 without any vote on the part of the community and she objected to the process that was used and said that the capital budget isn't something people read or understand. She felt very strongly that we should have done it like we always have, as a separate article or as a ballot item. The selectboard seemed to concur and offered no explanation other than the idea that it was capital spending. Linda Gage suggested that the agenda be more readily available on social media. Bob Thiefels asked if there is grant money for trucks and other equipment and Al Barber, fire chief, responded no. An audience member asked if we will eventually need an ambulance and Al said yes, but not in the near future. The article was passed on a voice vote with no dissent.

ARTICLE 7: Shall the Town approve the Carpenter-Carse Library allocation from the Town of Hinesburg of \$210,500, with the estimated sum of \$210,500 appropriated from property taxes to defray the library allocation from the Town? *Moved and seconded and passed with no discussion.*

ARTICLE 8: Shall the Town appropriate the sum of \$29,350, with the estimated sum of \$29,350 appropriated from property taxes, to be distributed as specifically designated to the agencies and organizations? *Moved and seconded and passed on a voice vote with no discussion.*

(If voters approved Articles 3 through 7 as presented, total general fund expenditures of \$3,369,689 will be required, with the estimated amount of \$2,842,389 to come from property tax revenue). **Please note that this amount was increased by \$2650 in Article 3.*

ARTICLE 9: Shall voters authorize the Selectboard to borrow money when needed to meet current expenses and indebtedness of the Town of Hinesburg? *Moved and seconded and passed on a voice vote.*

ARTICLE 10: Shall voters authorize the payment of real and personal property taxes for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2017, payable in full to the Town of Hinesburg in one (1) installment, with the due date being November 15, 2016? Any and all payments received in the Town Treasurer's Office later than midnight on November 15, 2016 will be considered delinquent and will be subject to the collection of interest at the rate of 1% per month or fraction thereof for the first three (3) months and thereafter at the rate of 1.5% per month or fraction thereof. *Moved and seconded. Doreen Patterson wondered why the interest had gone up compared to prior years when she recollected us lowering it before? Delinquent tax collector Missy Ross stated that it hadn't changed and that we had eliminated the penalty several years ago but that we needed to impose interest or there would not be an incentive to pay in a timely manner. The Article passed on a voice vote with no dissent.*

ARTICLE 11: Shall the voters authorize the Selectboard to appoint a collector of delinquent taxes pursuant to 17 V.S.A. § 265 ld? *Moved and seconded. Delinquent tax collector Missy Ross gave a brief overview of why this legislation had been passed by the legislature a year ago and stated that in her opinion it didn't make sense anymore for delinquent taxes to be collected by someone other than the town treasurer. Given that all records are computerized, from a financial control standpoint it is better to have all transactions take place under the Town's purview rather than have someone collecting money in their home and depositing it into their separate checking account. Article 11 was passed on a voice vote.*

ARTICLE 12: To transact any other business, as proper, to be brought before said meeting? *Roger Kohn stated that he thought the attendance at town meeting had suffered because not all citizens had received a town report in the mail and he made a motion to send the town report to everyone again next year. Someone asked how much money that Town had saved and the response was \$1500 plus or minus. After more discussion, Moderator Twarog called for a vote. It appeared to be too close to call, so he asked all those in favor to stand, and then those opposed. There were 52 voters in favor of mailing the report to all households and 35 opposed. This vote is non-binding and advisory only but the motion carried.*

Steve Gladstone asked a question about why there was an increase in legal fees? There have been more legal issues this year and they are difficult to anticipate from year to year. The feeling from the Selectboard is that it is better to have the money budgeted and not use it all than the opposite case.

There was a motion and a second to adjourn and the meeting was adjourned at 9:35 p.m.